

## ABSTRACT

A method and apparatus which protects software against unauthorized use which is bound to at least one certain hardware device. The hardware device includes unique hardware identification sequences like unique hardware numbers/addresses, serial numbers or other embedded hardware characterization sequences. A special license key has to be passed to the software at the first activation. The license key contains among other things encrypted hardware identification sequences which are compared with the read out sequences of the accessible hardware devices. The use of the software features is permitted if the sequences match.